



THE IMPACT OF A SOCIAL JUSTICE SERVICE-LEARNING FIELD EXPERIENCE IN A SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS COURSE

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Abstract

This interpretive study examines the outcomes of using a social justice service-learning field experience in a social foundations course to help illuminate for teacher candidates the often “invisible” institutionalized inequities of public schools. The findings demonstrate how social justice service-learning can be used as a field placement to increase preservice teachers’ exposure to diversity, to help refocus attention on the needs of individual learners, and to assist teacher candidates in understanding and questioning existing school structures.

Keywords: *service-learning, field experience, teacher education, diversity*

Introduction

Many teacher education programs in the U.S. are dealing with the push to remove social foundations coursework from the curriculum (deMarrais, 2013) in favor of more pragmatic courses that support the testing-based accountability movement (Neumann, 2009). At the same time, there is a growing movement in the field of teacher education to restructure teacher preparation programs around clinical practice (NCATE, 2010). Since there has historically been a divide between methods courses and foundations courses in teacher education (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009), the focus on clinical practice may result in a corresponding focus on methods courses to the exclusion of foundations. In addition, foundations courses that critically examine the societal structures of schools may be perceived as too political (Westheimer & Kahne, 2007). What can teacher education programs do to justify maintaining social foundations courses? Morrison (2007) described how one state added course content to required foundations courses to meet state-required competencies. Another strategy may be to incorporate a field experience that is aligned with specific curricular considerations in the foundations course. Since many states are increasing required field experience hours in response to pressure from accrediting bodies (Goddard, 2004), foundations courses that incorporate a field component may be less likely to be removed from the curriculum.

Though it is not unusual for social foundations courses to include a field experience component, those experiences are typically traditional observational field experiences in public

schools that do little to challenge teacher candidates' thinking about the nature of school structures and institutionalized practices (Morrison, 2007; Renner, Price, Keene & Little, 2004). We need to identify field experiences that prompt candidates to move beyond their own schooling experiences in order to examine the context of schools and begin to identify institutional structures that create inequities in education. A social justice service-learning field experience can provide opportunities for this kind of examination.

We designed a social justice service-learning field experience as a companion to a social foundations course. The service experience was designed to expand the array of field experiences in the teacher education program and to support the social justice goals of the course. The students in the foundations course are required to complete at least ten hours of tutoring (with at least five tutoring sessions) with pupils at a local Job Corps Center who are working to attain a high school diploma or the General Educational Development (GED) high school equivalency diploma. This interpretive study examines the outcomes of using a social justice service-learning field experience to help illuminate for teacher candidates the often "invisible" institutionalized inequities of public schools.

Review of Literature

There is a growing movement in teacher education to incorporate service-learning experiences into teacher preparation programs (Butin, 2007b), and research is providing evidence of the impacts of service-learning on preservice teachers. Some of these benefits include increased knowledge of the developmental needs of students (Vickers, 2007) and increased knowledge of practice and improved instructional skills (Hart & King, 2007). The benefits also include gains in self-efficacy (Wade, 1995; Wasserman, 2009). There is evidence that service-learning impacts preservice teachers' awareness of and receptiveness to diversity (Anderson, Swick, & Yff, 2001; Bell, Horn, & Roxas, 2007). This includes fostering openness to students who have traditionally been marginalized within the K-12 system (Clemons, Coffey, & Ewell, 2011). However, research has also shown that service-learning experiences can, at times, reinforce stereotypes for some preservice teachers (Boyle-Baise, 1998).

As service-learning is expanding in teacher education, it is also being incorporated in social foundations courses. According to Anderson and Erickson (2003), 21% of service-learning experiences included in teacher education programs are located in foundations courses. There are researchers who have explored the use of service-learning field experiences to support the social justice outcomes of social foundations courses. Boyle-Baise and Langford (2004) documented the effort to support a social justice orientation through a service-learning component completed as an alternative spring break. They found that students learned from each other and from the community and that for some students the experience increased their motivation to serve. Brabant and Hochman (2004) incorporated service-learning in a social foundations course, and one important outcome for teacher candidates was an increased understanding of the political nature of schooling. Finally, Renner, Price, Keene and Little (2004) found that service-learning can support a multicultural/antiracist stance in a social foundations course. This study seeks to add to the small, but growing, body of literature on social justice service-learning field experiences in social foundations.

There are a range of typologies that service-learning practitioners have used to situate their work. These typologies relate both to the underlying theoretical foundations of service-learning as well as their enactment in practice and resulting impacts (Tinkler, hannah, Tinkler, &

Miller, 2014). Morton (1995) defined three paradigms of service. These include charity (which focuses on direct service), project (which focuses on defining problems and seeking to enact solutions), and social change (which focuses on societal transformation). Morton viewed these paradigms not as a continuum of practices but rather as three different approaches to service that meet different purposes. He believed that all three paradigms have the potential to have positive impacts on individuals and communities, though he differentiated “thick” and “thin” forms of each of these types of service. According to Morton (1995), thin forms of service “lack integrity or depth” (p. 21), while thick forms of service “have integrity and depth” (p. 21). Thin forms of service can have negative outcomes, whereas thick forms align “values and action” (Bringle, Hatcher, & McIntosh, 2006, p. 5) within each of the three paradigms.

Butin (2007a) introduced a typology based on four models of community engagement. The first is a technical model that focuses on enhancing “content knowledge” (p. 36), the second is a cultural model that focuses on enhancing “civic engagement and cultural competency” (p. 36), the third is political which focuses on enhancing “social and political activism” (p. 36), and the fourth is anti-foundational that focuses on “cognitive dissonance” (p. 36). Butin (2007a) contends that each model of community engagement has its limitations. For example, the cultural model has the potential to foster a deficit perspective of service recipients and reinforce a privileged stance, while the political model can be viewed as supporting particular political ideologies. Finally, the limitations of the anti-foundational model stem from the possibility that students might become disillusioned by completing a community-engaged experience without a clear sense of possible solutions for issues/problems.

Mitchell (2008) categorized service-learning experiences as either traditional or critical. According to Mitchell, the literature on service-learning included “an unspoken debate that seemed to divide service-learning into two camps—a traditional approach that emphasizes service without attention to systems of inequality, and a critical approach that is unapologetic in its aim to dismantle structures of injustice” (p. 50). Mitchell identified three areas of distinction between these two camps: “working to redistribute power amongst all participants in the service-learning relationship, developing authentic relationships in the classroom and in the community, and working from a social change perspective” (p. 50). Sheffield (2011) questioned the distinction between traditional and critical service-learning given that community service-learning (CSL) is “inherently critical” (p. 139). Instead, he proposed a conceptualization of weak versus strong community service-learning. According to Sheffield, “in its strong form CSL has the radical potential to reconstruct individuals, communities and institutional structures that are currently oppressive” (p. 125), whereas in its weak form, “CSL is a reform rather than a radical departure from current practice or an educational revolution that would fundamentally change the way public education (or other institutions) operates in this country” (p. 125).

Seeking to achieve the aims of strong community service-learning (Sheffield, 2011), we structured the service-learning field experience with social justice goals in mind. Drawing from the service-learning literature, we identified important elements of what we conceive of as social justice service-learning; one important element is a focus on reciprocity (Donahue, Bowyer, & Rosenberg, 2003). As Sheffield (2011) pointed out, the challenge of supporting reciprocity (or mutuality) lies with moving past the perception of service as attending only to the needs of those being served. It is important that the experience is structured in such a way as to support the “understanding that the server is also in need and receives a service as well as providing one” (Sheffield, 2011, p. 78). In addition, social justice service-learning seeks to empower those being served by fostering relationships that challenge rather than support stereotypes and deficit think-

ing (Donahue, 2000; Marrullo & Edwards, 2000). In framing the service-learning experience around these principles, we hoped to provide a lived experience to help our students “unlearn” what they learned from their own experience with schools, as well as the lived experience needed to truly grasp new concepts about schooling they would be exposed to in the course. Working from Vygotskian theory, we recognize the need for intermental understandings scaffolded by those who have intimate knowledge of the concepts before intramental understandings are achieved (Newman & Holzman, 1993; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). When the teacher candidates interact with the students at Job Corps there is “the exchange of funds of knowledge” (Moll & Greenburg, 1993, p. 344) each has about schooling that can further our teacher candidates’ understanding of schooling that differs from their experiences. In other words, our students cannot truly understand new concepts about institutional structures of schooling without first engaging with others in dialogue about those structures.

Methods

Participants and Pedagogical Context

The teacher education program described in this study is located in a small, public university in the Mid-Atlantic region. The program has a commitment to social justice, and the theme is integrated throughout the courses in the program. The social foundations course is the second course in the education course sequence and is completed during the first or second year of coursework. The course includes topics such as the historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations of education, as well as school governance and finance, and was designed to promote a critical perspective. Course goals include: a) to increase awareness of systemic oppression based upon color, culture, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic status, b) to foster a dispositional commitment to meeting the needs of all learners and to increase knowledge of how to do so, c) to increase knowledge of strategies to interrupt oppression, and d) to develop problem posing strategies. Course readings, such as essays from *Rethinking Our Classrooms* (Au et al., 2007, Bigelow et al., 1994, Bigelow et al., 2001), are selected to challenge students’ conceptions of schools and schooling and to provide a point of reflection for the service-learning experience.

In order to provide a lived experience to challenge and expand our preservice teachers’ conceptions of education, we decided to add a service-learning component. The service-learning field experience includes at least ten hours of tutoring with students at a local Job Corps center. The students at the Job Corps Center are predominantly students of color (78% of the Job Corps students are African American males), and many of them come from urban areas in the region. Though most of the Job Corps pupils are high school age, some are in their early twenties. Job Corps students enter the federal, residential facility to pursue a trade. However, if they do not have a high school diploma upon entry, they are also required to pursue a high school diploma or GED. The students are tested upon arrival to determine basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The academic manager at the Job Corps center (at the time the data were collected) told us that it is not unusual for students to test at 3rd or 4th grade levels, this includes some of the students who enter with a high school diploma.

The preservice teachers were introduced to Job Corps when the academic manager visited campus with several Job Corps students to discuss the tutoring experience. The Job Corps students discussed their goals and ambitions and described how the preservice teachers could work

with them and their peers to help them reach these goals. The next step of the preparatory phase was an orientation at the Job Corps Center which included a tour led by Job Corps students. The preservice teachers primarily tutor Job Corps students who are studying for the GED or working to complete courses in the high school diploma program. The preservice teachers are required to complete at least ten hours of tutoring with a least five tutoring visits. Since most of the preservice teachers completed at least seven tutoring sessions, they had a consistent, sustained experience across the semester when combined with the preparatory interactions at the beginning of the semester.

When determining the time commitment for the project, we worked from the perspective of the 9th principle of the *Wingspread Special Report* (Honnet & Poulson, 1989). The report states: “The length of the experience and the amount of time required are determined by the service tasks involved and should be negotiated by all the parties” (p. 15). Since we offer four or five sections of the foundations course each semester, we can have as many as 100 students being placed for tutoring at the Job Corps Center. With this number of students, we are able to provide tutoring coverage throughout the week. However, if the university students were required to complete additional tutoring hours, it would potentially challenge the capacity of the Job Corps Center. In addition, since many of the preservice teachers work part-time while attending school, keeping the time commitment to a reasonable level means that there is less resistance to this added field component.

The participants of this study were 37 preservice teachers (28 females and nine males) from two different sections of the foundations course. All but two students agreed to participate in the study. The participants included elementary, secondary, and k-12 candidates. Three of the students were graduate students completing an MAT program, and the rest were undergraduates. The participants ranged in age from their late teens to early thirties, but most were traditional students. There are a variety of socioeconomic levels represented at the university, and some of the participants were first generation college students. However, the majority of the students in the teacher education program are white and middle class which was reflected in the demographics of the participants. Most of the participants came from rural or suburban towns in the region.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to explore the impact that this social justice service-learning field experience had on the preservice teachers and assess the outcomes of using this service-learning field placement, we used an interpretive framework. As Denzin (2001) stated: “The focus of interpretive research is on those life experiences that radically alter and shape the meanings persons give to themselves and their experiences” (p. 1). In order to explore the meaning that the preservice teachers made from this experience, multiple forms of data were collected. One of our data sources came from reflection papers that students completed in the course. We concur with Sheffield (2011) that reflection “binds” (p. 107) the service experience with the academic objectives of the course, and we embed reflection (both oral and written) consistently into the campus component of the course. Several times during the semester, the preservice teachers wrote reflection papers that required them to consider their experiences with their Job Corps tutees in relation to content we were examining in the foundations course. We included three sets of these reflection papers (111 papers in total) as part of our analysis. In addition, at the end of the semester the preservice teachers wrote a more extensive reflection of their overall assessment and analysis of the experi-

ence. This final reflection asked the preservice teachers to describe their experiences at Job Corps, then to critically examine their learning growth. We included the final reflections of all the participants (n=37) in our data analysis.

In order to triangulate our data (Creswell & Miller, 2000), we administered a brief anonymous questionnaire (with open-ended and closed-ended response items) at the end of the semester. This questionnaire asked participants to describe what they learned from the experience, to explain connections they made between course content and the experience, and to evaluate their ability to work with students from diverse backgrounds. The first and second authors coded the papers and questionnaires using an open coding process (Benaquisto, 2008). We then identified broader themes that emerged through this coding process.

After coding the papers and the questionnaires to develop tentative themes, the first author then interviewed six students (some from each section of the foundations course) to either confirm or refute our tentative findings. We selected six students with a range of previous experience with diversity and included five female students and one male student. The interviews were conducted in the semester following the completion of the course to allow some distance from the service-learning experience. We used a semi-structured interview protocol (Galletta, 2013) which asked participants to reflect on their experience, to explore their learning in relation to diversity, to examine how the experience supported (or failed to support) course content, and to compare the experience to current traditional field experiences they were completing that semester. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and were then coded by the first and second author using the same coding process used previously with the papers and questionnaires.

Findings

After analyzing the data from the reflection papers, questionnaires, and interviews, we determined that there were three primary outcomes from the social justice service-learning experience that support the social justice goals of the foundations course. These include: 1) greater exposure to diversity, 2) a more comprehensive emphasis on learners as individuals, and 3) a broader view of the social context of schools. In addition, we found that there was an unintended outcome of the experience that provides some cause for concern. We found that the service-learning experience may have fostered paternalistic attitudes for some of the preservice teachers.

Exposure to Diversity

One of the predominant themes of accrediting agencies is the need for teacher education graduates to be able to meet the needs of all learners (NCATE, 2010). We have positioned this service-learning experience in several ways, operating from a more expansive definition of diversity. Not only do we want our students to understand diversity in terms of ethnicity, culture, or first language, we want our students to understand that people approach life situations in different ways. We also want our students to understand that existing social structures, such as schools, are developed to meet the needs of some and not of others, that socio-economic status can influence not only what is offered in schools but how individuals engage with schools (Carter & Welner, 2013). Finally, we want our students to understand that the blending across categories of diversity will lead to alternative experiences. Since our students have met with relative success with existing institutions of learning, we believe that in order for them to meet the

needs of all learners, they need to interact with and learn from students for whom the existing school structures have not worked.

One of the challenges our university deals with is finding field placements in the region that provide significant experiences with diverse populations. We live in an area that is rural and predominantly white. Though we are able to facilitate some experiences in diverse schools, we are careful not to overburden these schools with too many placements. As mentioned before, our preservice teachers are predominantly white and middle class, and many of them come from towns or suburbs with similar populations. A consistent theme that appeared in the papers, questionnaires, and interviews was the power of this service-learning experience in relation to creating greater awareness of diversity. One participant said, "In the time I have spent [at Job Corps] I have learned more about educational diversity...than I could have ever hoped to learn in a classroom." For many of the students, this was their first significant experience interacting with students from diverse backgrounds. In fact, 12 of the participants (32%) noted on the questionnaire that this was their first or most intensive experience with diversity. One student wrote, "I think I came into contact with more diversity in my ten hours and twenty minutes at Job Corps than I have my entire life; it was an extremely eye-opening experience." Another wrote, "I had never worked with students who were racially different than me before Job Corps."

In written reflections, the students often used the terminology of culture shock to describe how they felt when they first began their tutoring at Job Corps. One student wrote, "For me, this experience was sort of culture shock." Another participant stated, "Well, for one, my school was almost completely white. It was a culture shock at first to go to Job Corps." Though we sought to provide what Sheffield (2011) calls "readiness" (p. 88) for the experience through the initial orientation activities, it is clear that some of the preservice teachers were not fully prepared for what they experienced. Some of the participants described the experience of being the minority for the first time. One participant wrote, "Having the opportunity to tutor at Job Corps placed me in a situation I had never been in before. The tables were turned on me; instead of being the majority I was the minority and put in an unfamiliar environment." Another wrote, "Tutoring at Job Corps was an eye-opening experience. Growing up in an agricultural, rural area I was surrounded by the white middle class of society. I was never placed in a situation where I was the minority; until Job Corps." For some of the participants, this experience of being in the minority helped them develop some understanding and empathy for what it feels like to be the minority. One student wrote, "After the first few visits to Job Corps I became more comfortable being the minority in a majority, and my initial feelings will remind me of how a lone African-American may feel in an entire school of white children."

Not only was this the first experience with diversity for many of the preservice teachers, they also viewed this as a positive experience. In the anonymous questionnaire, only two students out of the 37 expressed negative feelings about tutoring at Job Corps and felt that they did not learn from the experience. Since this was a positive experience for the majority of the participants, they viewed diversity as a positive aspect of schooling. One student wrote, "I now realize diversity can be a tool for teachers to connect with students." Another student said, "I realized how diversity should be celebrated and embraced and how I should open my mind to new kinds of people." This positive experience also challenged some of the preservice teachers to rethink stereotypes that they held. In fact, 14 participants (38%) wrote statements on the anonymous questionnaire that were coded as reconsidering stereotypes. One student wrote, "I was exposed to a very diverse group of students at Job Corps, and each student I worked with helped break the stereotypes I had previously held."

Emphasis on Learners as Individuals

When our teacher candidates enter their profession, they are expected to be able to focus on the individual learners within the classroom, not just the class as a whole. Often in a teacher education program, including in a social foundations course, the rhetoric is about groups of students, or whole classes. This focus on the whole class instead of the individual is often only challenged in courses that examine students with exceptionalities. In traditional field placements at this level, preservice teachers often sit at the back of the room observing the teacher's interactions with the class. The unit of analysis is the classroom as a whole and the focus tends to be on issues of classroom management rather than student learning. The challenge for teachers (and observers) is discerning whether individual students are meeting instructional goals. Lawrence and Butler (2010) conducted a study of a service-learning experience and found that preservice teachers realized that when they were teaching the full class, they thought students understood. However, when faced with the challenges of helping one individual student understand the topic/content, the preservice teachers realized that many students were not "getting it" during whole class instruction. This is an important realization that we would like our preservice teachers to develop early on in their field experiences.

The second outcome of this social justice service-learning experience was that the experience placed a greater emphasis on learners as individuals. When tutoring at Job Corps, the preservice teachers were working one-on-one with students. As stated by one participant who was interviewed, "Those are not the students that you get in a traditional field observation. Even now we're observing we don't get that one-on-one time with the students. You don't get to talk to them, interact with them." The preservice teachers were not passive observers; they were actively involved. As one student stated, "the service-learning forced you to like not just go and look at the world through a glass mirror, but to actually go in." Through this active involvement, the preservice teachers were able to see each student as a unique individual and learner; therefore the unit of analysis became the individual learner. The data support the idea that the preservice teachers developed an awareness of the importance of seeing learners as individuals.

Through recognizing learners as individuals, the participants also realized that diversity is not limited to cultural differences. One student wrote, "I also realize that diversity is not simply about race or gender...Many students are just as intelligent as the rest of their peers but require...a different technique." They recognized that students have different experiences, different learning styles and learning abilities, and different values. Twelve respondents (32%) wrote comments on the questionnaire that were coded as recognizing differences in learners. One student said, "I learned that each student is an individual that thinks, learns, and acts differently." Another wrote, "I worked with a variety of students who were all at different levels and all had different learning styles."

This one-on-one interaction provided the preservice teachers with the opportunity to get to know their tutees and better understand their learning needs. One student wrote, "I really learned what made students of all kinds 'tick.' What motivated them and what discouraged them." The data provide evidence that the preservice teachers began to understand what it really means to be a teacher for an individual that they care about and want to learn. We also encouraged the preservice teachers to ask their tutees questions about their experiences in schools so they could begin to understand how their schooling experiences had impacted their tutees' lives. These dialogues helped the preservice teachers to recognize that their tutees' prior schooling experience had not always supported their tutees' success. Many of them wrote passionately about

how they had worked with students who had been failed by the system and they were able to see first-hand the impact of inequitable education. Their frustration was compounded by the fact that they realized the intelligence, strength and resilience of the Job Corps students with whom they worked. Twelve participants (32%) wrote statements on the questionnaire that were coded as recognizing the abilities of the Job Corps students. One student wrote, “I learned that the students at Job Corps are just as capable and determined to succeed as I am.”

With this recognition of the abilities of the Job Corps students came the realization of a teacher’s responsibility for all of the learners in a classroom. One student said, “I think if more teachers made the effort to be available on a one on one basis, the number of students dropping out, failing, or seeking alternative means of education would be lessened.” Another participant wrote, “I learned a lot about the huge responsibility of the teacher and about how every student is so unique and requires a unique approach to be successful.” Many of the students wrote about the difficulty of finding a way to connect with and communicate with their tutees. With this came the realization that a teacher has to communicate with a student in a way that the student can relate to in order for learning to occur. One student wrote, “The teacher must be an active force of learning in the room. They must interact with the students and adapt to each individual need. There is no room in the classroom for a one size fits all strategy to teaching.” Some of the students were able to make connections between their tutoring experiences and the ideas of culturally relevant instruction. One participant stated, “You must make adjustments to work with the diversity in your classroom and to take full advantage of all it has to offer.” Another wrote, “This experience helped me realize that as a teacher I will have students from diverse backgrounds and their personal experiences will not always be like my own. If I want my classroom to be an equal opportunity classroom, I must be aware, have an open mind, and allow flexibility in my classroom so that I do not ignore the needs of some students.” The service-learning experience allowed the participants to grapple with these ideas in a very concrete way rather than simply considering them as an abstract construct.

View of the Social Context of Schools

The last positive outcome of using a social justice service-learning experience, one which is particularly important for a social foundations course, is that the experience provided the preservice teachers with a broader view into the social context of schools. An important goal of most social foundations courses is to provide preservice teachers with an understanding of the sociocultural context of schools. The foundations course described in this study included content that is typical in many social foundations courses. During the semester, we examined some of the inequities in education that are problematic in the American public school system. Some of the issues we examined included the funding of schools, the challenges urban schools face in hiring and retaining quality teachers, the impact of low expectations on student achievement, and factors that lead to students dropping out of school. As mentioned, most of the preservice teachers in this study came from rural or suburban schools. If the preservice teachers had completed a traditional field experience, they would have spent time in schools not that different than the schools they had attended. Instead, they were able to interact with students who had, for the most part, been failed by the public school system. We asked them when they were tutoring to make a point to ask their tutees about their experiences with schools before Job Corps. The stories they heard forced them to examine whether or not we provide equal educational opportunities for all students and gave them concrete examples for some of the content examined in the course. One

student wrote, “This experience gave me a personal look into the problems in public education. Without this Job Corps experience, I don’t think I would have understood the problems in education to the extent that I do now.”

The data provide evidence that the service-learning supported the content/topics studied in the foundations course. One of the questions on the questionnaire asked whether the service-learning experience supported an understanding of the issues we studied in class. Thirty-six of the 37 respondents (97%) replied in the affirmative. One area of increased knowledge related to greater awareness of educational inequalities. There were 26 respondents (70%) who made statements on the questionnaire that were coded as showing a heightened awareness of inequalities. One student wrote, “I received the opportunity to work closely with students who had been cheated by an inadequate education system. The statistics are not just statistics to me anymore. The numbers represent real students.” One area of heightened awareness related to school financing and how systems of financing lead to profound differences in schools. During the semester while we examined the topic of school finance, the preservice teachers were prompted to ask their tutees about the facilities and resources available at the schools they attended prior to Job Corps. Many of the preservice teachers heard stories that directly supported what we were reading and discussing in the foundations course. One participant wrote, “We discussed this in class (overcrowded, under-resourced schools) but I heard about it from a Job Corps student first-hand.” Through interacting with the Job Corps students, these issues became real to the preservice teachers. One participant stated, “It was like living out the articles we were reading.” Another wrote, “It showed me the real world side of everything. It gave me a chance to experience things other than what I know.”

Unintended Outcome

Though the data provide evidence that the service-learning experience, for the most part, supported the social justice goals of the foundations course, the data also provide evidence of an outcome that raises concern. When we coded the responses to the questionnaire, 11 of the participants (30%) made comments that we coded as representing a paternalistic perception of their relationship with their tutee. One participant wrote, “If you can make your students aware that you care and give them someone to look up to, you might make a bigger difference.” We also found evidence in the final reflection papers that the experience fostered paternalistic attitudes for some of the preservice teachers. Some of them perceived their role as *I will save you* versus *I recognize that you are capable of saving yourself*. This makes us wonder whether we fully met the goal of reciprocity in the experience. Though the data provide evidence that the preservice teachers recognized their learning growth, some of them may have perceived the experience as giving more than they gained. Though we encourage dialogue between our preservice teachers and their Job Corps tutees, and there is evidence in the data that the preservice teachers engaged in dialogue, we are working to further support dialogue in the course from the outset of the experience. As Sheffield (2011) pointed out, “It is the understanding that in any service situation there must exist a dialogue between server and served, and the line between the two groups is blurred in that dialogical interaction” (p. 84).

We hope that by encouraging increased dialogue we can further blur that line so that the experience is viewed as mutually beneficial and empowering for both sides. This is important, since, as stated by Macedo (1998), “The real issue is to understand one’s privileged position in the process of helping so as not to, on the one hand, turn help into a type of missionary paternal-

ism and, on the other hand, limit the possibilities for the creation of structures that lead to real empowerment” (p. xxix). We want our preservice teachers to come away from the experience with the goal of empowering their future students. Listening to the stories of the Job Corps students, who have chosen to make a positive change in their lives, may help our teacher candidates develop an understanding of the importance of facilitating change that comes from the students themselves. And we hope that they will come to value the importance of the sociocultural understandings of what is needed and what may work within the unique life circumstances of the students receiving the support.

Implications

Teacher educators with a social justice perspective often struggle to find ways to help their students understand oppressive structures endemic to our education system, particularly if these structures have benefitted the teacher candidates and are thus “invisible” for scrutiny since they are part of these students’ culture of schooling. Social justice service-learning is one avenue to provide this perspective when it affords the opportunity for teacher candidates to interact with and learn from students who did not benefit from these structures. This study demonstrates how service-learning can be used as a field placement to increase preservice teachers’ exposure to diversity, to help refocus attention on the needs of individual learners, and to assist candidates in understanding and questioning existing school structures. By incorporating this service-learning experience as a field component, the teacher education program can meet state requirements for additional field hours while also supporting the social justice goals of the foundations course.

From a constructivist point of view, if in a foundations class we present information on schooling as a body of knowledge or as a set of intricately connected facts that stay within the college classroom and we make no effort to help our teacher candidates contextualize and experience the impact of these facts, the knowledge they gain may remain inert and unavailable for reflective analysis. We must also prepare them to deconstruct this information in light of populations of students who have been marginalized or “pushed out” (Tuck, 2012) of the education system, which is purported to be an inalienable right of all children in the United States. If our teacher candidates are going to be effective as teachers, we believe that they need to go beyond their “single story” (Adichie, 2009) of schooling in order to develop an understanding of how educational systems affect the students for whom these systems do not work, as well as for the students, like themselves, for whom these systems do work.

Though the data provide evidence of positive impacts of this experience on the preservice teachers’ professed knowledge and beliefs, we do not currently have evidence that these beliefs will lead to improved practice. Further research is warranted to examine how or whether these beliefs are enacted in practice. As stated by Sheffield (2011): “In the end, the distinction between weaker and stronger conceptions of CSL is in the degree to which CSL projects focus on both inward self-reconstruction relative to the outward *and* the degree to which that self-reconstruction is carried over into acting to reconstruct, to transform, community” (p. 139). The authors are currently considering a longitudinal study that would follow the preservice teachers into student teaching and possibly their first year of teaching to determine whether the service-learning experience has long-term impacts. In addition, we are considering how to bring the voices of the Job Corps students into the research process. The second author has been pursuing permission from the federal government to interview the Job Corps students. Though the academic manager at Job Corps has pointed to evidence of improved test scores and GED pass rates

through the partnership, it is important that we fully explore the impact of the partnership on Job Corps to ensure we are not simply using the Job Corps students to support our program goals.

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